



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 24, 2008

National Veterans' Art Festival Coming to Riverside in October *Performance, Displays by Award-Winning Veteran Artists*

WASHINGTON – More than 120 veterans from across the country who are medal winners in national creative writing, music, dance, drama or visual arts competitions are preparing to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Riverside, Calif., from Oct. 20-26.

"Creative expression is an important component of healthy living," said Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "This annual Festival shows that real healing goes well beyond our patients' physical needs. Creative arts therapy has a key role at VA in rehabilitation and recovery."

The Creative Arts Festival, presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV) and the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA), is the culmination of a year-long fine arts talent competition involving more than 3,000 participants nationwide. The Festival is open to all veterans receiving care at VA medical facilities. It is hosted this year by the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System and takes place in Riverside, Calif.

"This Festival continues to give thousands of veterans the opportunity to express themselves creatively, as well as enabling them to experience life changing experiences to their health and overall mindset," said HHV Executive Director Mike Lynch. "As a national co-sponsor of the Festival, HHV is really proud to bring well-deserved recognition to our outstanding veteran performers and artists."

"The American Legion Auxiliary's long tradition of supporting America's veterans continues with its annual co-sponsorship of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival," said National President Desi Stoy. "Rarely can one event accomplish so much, offering extensive recreational therapy and rehabilitation for veterans nationwide, while delighting audiences in both the visual and performing arts."

Creative Arts 2/2/2/2

At this year's event, talented veterans will come to Riverside for a week of rehearsals and workshops, concluding on Sunday, Oct. 26, with a visual art exhibit and gala variety stage show at Ben Lewis Hall, located in the Riverside Convention Center.

The artists will exhibit their work from 12:15 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. on Oct. 26 in the East Foyer of the Riverside Convention Center. At 2:00 p.m., performers in music, drama and dance will showcase their talent in a stage show, backed by a professional orchestra. Award winners in the creative writing division will also take part in the performance.

Actress Bo Derek, honorary chairperson of VA's National Rehabilitation Special Events, is attending the Creative Arts Festival again this year.

For further information about the event, contact Kim Byers, public affairs director, at (734) 845-3377, or log on to the Festival's Web site: www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov.

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